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The Universal Destination of Goods: A Eucharistic Understanding

From *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes, 1965)*:

69. God intended the earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should be in abundance for all in like manner. Whatever the forms of property may be, as adapted to the legitimate institutions of peoples, according to diverse and changeable circumstances, attention must always be paid to this universal destination of earthly goods. In using them, therefore, man should regard the external things that he legitimately possesses not only as his own but also as common in the sense that they should be able to benefit not only him but also others. On the other hand, the right of having a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to everyone. The Fathers and Doctors of the Church held this opinion, teaching that men are obliged to come to the relief of the poor and to do so not merely out of their superfluous goods. If one is in extreme necessity, he has the right to procure for himself what he needs out of the riches of others. Since there are so many people prostrate with hunger in the world, this sacred council urges all, both individuals and governments, to remember the aphorism of the Fathers, "Feed the man dying of hunger, because if you have not fed him, you have killed him," and really to share and employ their earthly goods, according to the ability of each, especially by supporting individuals or peoples with the aid by which they may be able to help and develop themselves.

From Pope Saint John Paul II's Homily to the Eucharistic Congress in Brazil (1980):

Eucharistic communion is the sign of the meeting of all the faithful. A truly inspiring sign, because at the holy table all the differences of race or social class disappear, leaving only the participation of all in the same holy food. This participation, identical in all, signifies and realizes the suppression of all that divides men, and brings about the meeting of all at a higher level, where all opposition is eliminated. Thus the Eucharist becomes the great instrument of bringing men closer to one another. Whenever the faithful take part in it with a sincere heart, they receive a new impetus to establish a better relationship among themselves, leading to recognition of one another's rights and corresponding duties as well. In this way the satisfaction of the requirements of justice is facilitated, precisely because of the particular climate of interpersonal relations that brotherly charity creates within the same community.

(The first excerpt on this handout is from *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* [*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965], number 69, at www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. Copyright © Liberia Editrice Vaticana [LEV].

The second excerpt on this handout is from Saint John Paul II's "Homily at the Inaugural Mass of the National Eucharistic Congress at Fortaleza," which was published in *L'Osservatore Romano* [English Edition], August 11, 1980, and is reprinted here from *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, revised edition, edited by J. Neuner and J. Dupuis [New York: Alba House], page 443. Copyright © 1982 Theological Publications in India.)

